

**In the Claims:**

The following is an amendment to the claims in ascending order showing a detailed listing of all claims that are or were in the application irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, and pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121 (c).

Amend claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13 and 18, and cancel claim 2 without prejudice as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for absorbing energy in a collapsible steering column of a vehicle by being deformable in response to an excessive frontal impacting force to the steering column so that injury to [[the]] a vehicle operator is reduced comprising:
  - a first steering column member;
  - a second steering column member connected to said first steering column member for sliding movement;
  - a first anvil associated with a said first steering column member;
  - a second anvil associated with said second steering column member; [[and]]  
an energy absorbing member having a first portion extending around and operable to be drawn over said first anvil and a second portion extending around and operable to be drawn over said second anvil; and  
a locking device associated with said energy absorbing member and movable between a locked position locking one of said first and second anvils against an associated portion of said energy absorbing member for preventing said energy absorbing member from being drawn over said locked anvil and a released position separating one of said first and second anvils from an associated steering column member for allowing said energy absorbing member to be drawn over said separated anvil.

Please cancel claim 2.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim [[2]] 1 wherein said energy absorbing member absorbs energy at a first rate as said first portion is drawn over said first anvil and absorbs energy at a second rate as said second portion is drawn over said second anvil, said first and second rates being different from one another.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said one of said first and second portions locked by said locking device relative to said respective anvil corresponds to a lower of said first and second rates.

Please cancel claim 5.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim [[2]] 1 wherein said locking device includes a first surface and a second surface movably positioned with respect to one another and wherein said energy absorbing member extends between said first and second surfaces so that said energy absorbing member is selectively compressible between said first and second surfaces to generate frictional resistance to movement of said energy absorbing member relative to said first and second surfaces.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein one of said first and second surfaces is defined by one of said first and second anvils.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said locking device includes a releasing device operable to separate said one anvil from the respective steering column member and, after said releasing device releases said one anvil, said energy absorbing member moves said one anvil closer to the other of said first and second surfaces in response to said sliding movement to compress said energy absorbing member between said first and second surfaces.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said releasing device includes a pyrotechnic charge.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said locking device includes a third surface fixedly spaced from said other surface and movably positioned with respect to said one surface wherein said energy absorbing member extends between said third surface and said one surface so that said energy absorbing member is selectively compressible between said third surface and said one surface to generate frictional resistance to movement of said energy absorbing member relative to said third surface and said one surface.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein said other surface and said third surface are spaced a first distance from one another and said one anvil being wider than said first distance.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim [[2]] 1 wherein said energy absorbing member defines an aperture and said locking device includes a pin ~~releasably inserted~~ releasably in said aperture.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for absorbing energy in a collapsible steering column of a vehicle by being deformable in response to an excessive frontal impacting force to the steering column so that injury to [[the]] ~~a~~ vehicle operator is reduced comprising:

a first steering column member;

a second steering column member connected to said first steering column member for sliding movement;

a first anvil associated with a said first steering column member;

a second anvil associated with said second steering column member;

an energy absorbing member having a first portion extending around and operable to be drawn over said first anvil and a second portion extending around and operable to be drawn over said second anvil wherein said energy absorbing member absorbs energy at a first rate as said first portion is drawn over said first anvil and absorbs energy at a second rate as said second portion is drawn over said second anvil, said first rate being lower than said second rate; and

a locking device associated with said energy absorbing member and movable between a locked position locking said first anvil to [[lock]] said first portion for preventing said energy absorbing member from being drawn over said first anvil while allowing relative to said first anvil said second portion to be drawn over said second anvil and a released position separating said first anvil from said first steering column member for allowing said energy absorbing member to be drawn over said first anvil.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said locking device includes a first surface and a second surface movably positioned with respect to one another and wherein said energy absorbing member extends between said first and second surfaces so that said energy absorbing member is selectively compressible between said first and second surfaces to generate frictional resistance to movement of said energy absorbing member relative to said first and second surfaces and wherein said first surface is defined by said first anvil.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said locking device includes a releasing device operable to separate said first anvil from said first steering column member and, after said releasing device releases said first anvil, said energy absorbing member moves said first anvil closer to said second surface in response to said sliding movement to compress said energy absorbing member between said first and second surfaces.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said locking device includes a third surface fixedly spaced from said second surface and movably positioned with respect to said first surface and wherein said energy absorbing member extends between said second surface and said third surface so that said energy absorbing member is selectively compressible between said second and said third surfaces to generate frictional resistance to movement of said energy absorbing member relative to said second and said third surface.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein said first and third surfaces are spaced a first distance from one another and said first anvil being wider than said first distance.

18. (Currently Amended) [[The]] An apparatus of claim 13 for absorbing energy in a collapsible steering column of a vehicle by being deformable in response to an excessive frontal impacting force to the steering column so that injury to a vehicle operator is reduced comprising:

a first steering column member;

a second steering column member connected to said first steering column member for sliding movement;

a first anvil associated with a said first steering column member;

a second anvil associated with said second steering column member;

an energy absorbing member having a first portion extending around and operable to be drawn over said first anvil and a second portion extending around and operable to be drawn over said second anvil wherein said energy absorbing member absorbs energy at a first rate as said first portion is drawn over said first anvil and absorbs energy at a second rate as said second portion is drawn over said second anvil, said first rate being lower than said second rate;

a locking device associated with said energy absorbing member to lock said first portion relative to said first anvil; and

wherein said energy absorbing member defines an aperture and said locking device includes a pin releasably inserted releasably in said aperture.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said first portion and said second portion have different widths.